

**Friendship Heights  
Transportation Management District  
Advisory Committee  
November 8, 2011**

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**Voting Members**

James Calderwood	Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
William P. Farley (Chair)	Town of Somerset
Kerri Gates	The JBG Companies
Campbell Graeb	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Cobey R. Kuff	Wisconsin Place
Allison Lazare	United Educators Insurance
Ann F. Lewis	Friendship Heights Village
William Nathan	M&T Bank
Robert Schwarzbart	Friendship Heights Village Council

**Non-voting Members**

Sandra L. Brecher	MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
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**TMD Staff**

Nakengi Byrd	MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Jim Carlson	MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Sheila Wilson	MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

**Absent**

Julie Davis	Somerset House Management Assn.
Joe Dixon	GEICO
Cherian Eapen	M-NCPPC
Tiffany Gee (Vice Chair)	Chevy Chase Land Company
Capt. David Falcinelli	Montgomery County Police
Kenneth Hartman	B-CC Services Center

**Guests**

Bob Joiner	Agenda News
Sandra Jones	GEICO for Joe Dixon
Jeffrey Slavin	Mayor, Town of Somerset
Laura Thornton	Chevy Chase Patch

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Abbreviations used herein include:

CERB = Committee Evaluation and Review Board  
CMAQ = Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality  
FHTMD AC = Friendship Heights TMD Advisory Committee  
JARC = Job Access and Reverse Commute  
SSTMD AC = Silver Spring TMD Advisory Committee  
TMP = Traffic Mitigation Plan

**Items 1, 2 & 3 – Introductions/Minutes Approval/Chair’s Comments:** **Chair William Farley** called the meeting to order and asked members and guests to introduce themselves. **Mr. Farley** asked if there were any additional items to add to the agenda, since there was no guest presenter.

**Robert Schwarzbart** announced that National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Acting General Counsel **Lafe Solomon** would be speaking at the Friendship Heights Village Center on Monday, November 21 at 7:30 PM. His remarks will touch on the Boeing case, currently in the news, and the controversy surrounding the effort to move one of its manufacturing plants to South Carolina.

**ACTION:** A motion was made to approve the September and October minutes; the motion was seconded and the minutes were approved. **Jim Carlson** noted that in order to make more efficient use of staff time, future minutes will have to be a little less detailed. The exception was for the September minutes, in order to accommodate comments by **Delegate Ariana Kelly**.

**Mr. Farley** announced the reappointment of himself and **Coby Kuff** to full first terms on the Committee.

**Item 4 – Council Bill 29-11:** **Mr. Carlson** said Bill 29-11, proposing the elimination and consolidation of the County’s boards, committees and commissions, did not receive support from the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment (T&E) Committee. The vote against the bill was 3-0; therefore, the full Council did not vote on the measure which is the usual practice when a bill is voted down in committee. The bill will be allowed to expire without a vote.

**Mr. Carlson** said that although the County’s boards and committees are composed of volunteers – and the County is grateful for them – there is a large amount of staff time expended in putting together agendas, producing minutes, arranging guests and venues, etc. Council will continue to look at the County’s boards and committees to find some efficiency and cost savings.

**Mr. Schwarzbart** said the boards and committees, including the TMD Advisory Committee, are one of the County’s greatest bargains. The County would not want to pay the salaries of the Committee members; and consolidation, if it involves relocation and combining efforts with other committees, will take people away from the areas where they are most effective and dilute their influence. **Mr. Schwarzbart** called attention to a quote from **Councilmember Leventhal** in an article in which said the Friendship Heights TMD had been very effective in bringing business and community organizations together.

**Mr. Farley** added that the Committee has been effective in discussions with the various political leaders who have attended as guests, such as **Delegate Ariana Kelly**, by allowing them an effective way to reach constituents and engage in give and take with the community.

**Mr. Carlson** suggested that one possibility for making the Committee more efficient and finding some cost saving would be to have quarterly meetings and, when there is a speaker of general interest to all – such as recent presentations on car sharing and bike sharing – combining TMD Advisory Committees may make sense. Speakers would not have to travel from meeting to meeting, saying essentially the same thing. There are currently four TMD Advisory Committees, with a fifth on the way (Greater Shady Grove). **Mr. Carlson** asked the Committee members’ opinions of that proposal.

Discussion of the suggestion to combine TMD meetings raised the following points:

- Committee influence would be diluted in a larger group setting.
- Speakers, particularly elected officials, do not mind making reaching out in multiple venues.

- The FHTMD Advisory Committee is a cost only in staff time, and Committee members can assist by writing letters, making phone calls to guests and other tasks to cut back on the use of staff time.
- Although guests have some prepared remarks, they also tailor their presentations to the particular audience. They would not necessarily be making the same presentation multiple times, and the question and answer session would cover points that are more germane to the particular TMD.
- In the case of political guests, if the Committee meeting is not in their district they may not be as interested in coming.
- The Committee builds on its knowledge base of transportation issues by more frequent exposure and discussion. That knowledge and expertise allows for a more effective discussion with guests. Less frequent, quarterly meetings would tend to undermine that continuous learning curve.
- The County's committee structure requires face-to-face meetings for anything requiring a vote. In the event there is a need for a decision on an urgent issue, the Committee would have to convene during non-meeting months.
- There would be more discontinuity with quarterly meetings, and issues may not be adequately addressed.

**Items 5 & 6 – Commuter Services Updates / Other Business:** **Mr. Farley** called the Committee's attention to an article in the meeting packet announcing that the Chevy Chase Club Board of Governors cancelled the planned use of methyl bromide on the course. The issue had generated a community backlash because the chemical is seen as a significant health hazard, especially when used in a dense, urban setting. The Committee had voted to send a letter to the County Council opposing the use of methyl bromide. **Mr. Farley** suggested instead that a letter of thanks be sent to the Chevy Chase Club Board of Governors.

**ACTION:** A motion was made to draft a letter to the Chevy Chase Country Club Board of Governors thanking them for not using methyl bromide. The motion was seconded and approved with one abstention.

**Ann Lewis** thanked **Mr. Farley** for bringing the issue to the Committee's attention and raising awareness in the community about the dangers of methyl bromide. **Mr. Farley** noted that Somerset Mayor **Jeffrey Slavin** also made a significant contribution to the effort.

**Mr. Kuff** said that club members probably had been told the effects of the chemical would quickly dissipate in a couple of days.

**Mr. Carlson** announced that Bill 32-11, establishing the Committee Evaluation and Review Board (CERB), did pass the full Council. Within 60 days of establishing CERB, which is not expected until early next year, **Mr. Carlson** said he would be required to produce the following:

- Description of the work the TMD Advisory Committee does
- Justification for why the Committee should continue
- List of accomplishments from the prior two years
- Two year work program
- Explanation of the amount of resources, including staff time, used and a plan to reduce the use of those resources.

**Mr. Carlson** reviewed a previously created "Action Plan" which lists various transit and pedestrian safety projects requiring Advisory Committee input:

- Improve the supply of commute options to/from Friendship Heights TMD – Review transit service; frequency; scheduling; types of vehicles; ridership trends.

- Improve circulation within the TMD – Review existing non-auto alternatives, including pedestrian, bicycle, taxi & shuttles. Identify the key improvements needed for pedestrian, bicycle and bus circulation.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in the TMD – Identify the key factors affecting pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Weigh in on car sharing and bike sharing options.
- Improve the use of existing commute options in the TMD – Review employer traffic mitigation reports (TMP) and TMP Annual Reports; explore roles of marketing & outreach to employers/employees; promote the TRiPS Commuter Store; analyze the role of transit subsidies in commuting choices.
- Understand the role of parking supply and cost.
- Understand and promote telework options.
- Provide advice to the County on regional issues, such as Metro funding, the Purple Line, the Corridor Cities Transitway and bus rapid transit.

**Mr. Carlson** said he would circulate the Action Plan by email and requested that members add to it any other projects or recommendations that seem appropriate.

Further discussion of Action Plan pending projects and accomplishment included:

Pending Projects -

- Lengthening the pedestrian crossing time in front of the medical buildings at 5454 and 5530 Wisconsin Avenue
- Trimming limbs and overgrown vegetation blocking street signs on Willard Avenue and River Road
- Improving all crosswalks with repainting and cross hatching
- Signage and enforcement to prevent vehicles from blocking the Friendship Boulevard mid-block crosswalk
- Montgomery County Police to enforce traffic / parking rules on a more frequent basis
- Getting coordinated left turn arrows at the Western Avenue signal, where southbound Friendship Blvd. meets northbound Jenifer Street in front of Lord & Taylor.

Accomplishments -

- Several traffic and pedestrian improvements on Friendship Boulevard between Willard and Western Avenue were implemented as a result of Advisory Committee recommendations:
  - No Parking / No Standing signs on northbound lane, eliminating the need for northbound traffic to swerve into the opposing lane
  - Signs prohibiting nose-in parking on the southbound side to keep parked vehicles from blocking pedestrian sidewalk access
  - Realigned the traffic pattern at the Friendship Boulevard / Jenifer Street intersection (front of Lord and Taylor) to improve vehicle safety
- Succeeded in keeping the Friendship Heights bus station open during ceiling renovation
- Repaved Willard Avenue after a major water main break
- Persuaded the Count to move the taxi stand to its historical location on Wisconsin Circle
- Had a bus stop bench installed on Willard Avenue at North Park Avenue near GEICO

Commuter Services Updates – **Ms. Brecher** said DOT staff participated in a session on bike sharing with the Council’s Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment (“T&E”) Committee, presenting information on steps are being taken to establish the County’s bike sharing program. Council members

recommended that bike sharing be pursued, especially for the down-County areas inside the Beltway. As currently planned the down-County project will entail 50 bike sharing stations with 200 bikes placed along the two legs of the Red Line, from the District line through Friendship Heights, Bethesda and the Medical Center on the west leg, and from Takoma Park, Silver Spring, Montgomery Hills and Forest Glen on the east leg. Funding for this project has not yet been secured. **Ms. Brecher** asked Committee members to take a look around the Friendship Heights area for promising sites for bike sharing stations. Both the Chevy Chase Land Company and Whole Foods have committed to paying for bike stations.

In the near term the County has been awarded funding under the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program, allowing for the installation of stations in the Rockville and Shady Grove areas. The City of Rockville is a partner in this effort and will be providing matching funds for 20 bike share stations in a portion of the City of Rockville and the Shady Grove TMD.

The State of Maryland has announced that grants are available – for capital funding only – from the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program; the funding will consist of 80 percent federal and 20 percent local match funds. Stations, the capital cost, are \$56,000 each; maintenance and operational cost is \$25,000 per year, per station. The County would contract with a vendor, as the District has done with Capital Bikeshare, to purchase and install the stations and provide the maintenance operations.

**Mr. Carlson** announced the winners of the Walk & Ride Challenge: The "CCH Green Trekkers" from Whole Foods Market took the Grand Prize. In second place were the "PARC PACERS" from Parc Somerset Condominium. Grand prize-winning team members receive a \$100 VISA gift card and \$50 in SmarBenefits value. Second-place team members receive a \$50 VISA gift card. The Challenge drew over 50 teams and 300 participants from Friendship Heights and Silver Spring. It was a very successful inaugural event for both communities and will be planned again for next year.

Commuter Services sponsored two seminars in October, one in Friendship Heights and one in Silver Spring, to update employers on recent tax changes to SmartBenefits. Employers were briefed by a representative from Metro; also on hand was a representative from the Maryland Mass Transit Administration to explain the state's Commuter Tax Credit. **Ms. Brecher** said the \$230 a month that employers can provide tax-free to employees is due to sunset December 31. Unless Congress extends the law the transit benefit will be reduced to its pre-stimulus level of \$120 (or \$125 - indexing the amount to the Consumer Price Index).

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 AM

Next meeting date: December 13, 2011